

Historical Figures

I. Philosophers of the Enlightenment (The Age of Reason)

- **John Locke (1632-1704):** An English philosopher who is a foundational figure of the Enlightenment. He published ***Two Treatises on Government*** in 1690, wherein he argued that all men are born with **natural rights**—specifically life, liberty, and property. He proposed a "natural contract" between rulers and citizens, asserting that government exists solely to protect these rights. If a ruler violates this contract, Locke argued the people have the right and duty to overthrow that government (the **Consent of the Governed**).
- **Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679):** Often considered the father of modern political thought, he published ***Leviathan***. Unlike Locke, Hobbes held a pessimistic view of human nature, believing people are inherently selfish, greedy, and violent. He argued that life in a state of nature is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short". To maintain order, he believed people must enter a **Social Contract** to surrender their freedoms to an **absolute ruler** with ultimate control.
- **Charles-Louis Montesquieu (1689-1755):** A French nobleman who expanded on Locke's ideas in his 1748 work, ***The Spirit of the Laws***. He argued that the best way to prevent government tyranny was the **separation of powers**. He proposed dividing government into three distinct branches: **Legislative** (lawmaking), **Executive** (enforcing laws), and **Judicial** (interpreting laws).
- **Voltaire (1694-1778):** A French philosopher known for his fierce opposition to the Catholic Church and state-mandated religion. He argued that religion should be a private practice and blamed state religion for historical intolerance and conflict. He was a staunch advocate for **freedom of expression** and spoke out against **censorship**. He is famously associated with the sentiment of defending to the death one's right to speak, even if he disagreed with the content.
- **Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778):** A French thinker who published ***The Social Contract*** in 1762. He criticized the "Divine Right of Kings," arguing instead that a social contract exists where people give up certain freedoms for state protection. He championed the **"General Will,"** asserting that because no one person can

determine the desires of the people, the population itself must be the ones making the laws.

- **Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797):** A British writer who laid the foundation for modern women's rights. In ***A Vindication of the Rights of Woman***, she challenged the 18th-century view that women were less intelligent than men, arguing that women appeared so only because they lacked education. She advocated for women's right to be "rational and free".
 - **Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794):** A renowned Italian criminologist who wrote ***On Crimes and Punishments*** (1764). He took the courageous stand that the **accused have rights**, including the right to a fair trial. He condemned secret accusations, torture, and the death penalty, asserting that punishment must fit the crime.
 - **Auguste Comte:** A 19th-century philosopher associated with **Positivism**. He believed that human understanding of the universe progressed through three stages: the **Theological** (belief-guided), the **Metaphysical** (rational/scientific-guided), and the **Positive** (guided by individual rights and social science).
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II. Figures of the Age of Revolutions (1750-1900)

- **King George III:** The British monarch who angered American colonists by attempting to tax them to pay for the **Seven Years War** and passing the **Proclamation of 1763**, which forbade settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains.
- **Thomas Jefferson:** An American Founding Father who borrowed heavily from John Locke's ideas of natural rights when drafting the **U.S. Declaration of Independence**.
- **George Washington:** Appointed by the Second Continental Congress as the Commander of the **Continental Army**. He led the colonial forces to victory against Britain and later served as the first U.S. President.
- **Marquis de Lafayette:** A French nobleman who lobbied for French reinforcements for the American Revolution in 1779. He later became a key figure in the French Revolution, associated with the **Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen**.

- **Friedrich von Steuben:** A Prussian captain and talented drillmaster who helped train the Continental Army during the American Revolution.
- **King Louis XVI:** The French monarch during the start of the French Revolution. Described as a "feeble" and inadequate leader who preferred hunting and lock-making to state affairs. His inability to manage France's debt led to the **Estates General** meeting and the subsequent revolution. He was eventually executed by guillotine in 1793.
- **Marie Antoinette:** The Austrian-born Queen of France, mockingly known as "**Madam Deficit**" for her lavish spending on gowns and gambling while the nation starved. She was executed during the Reign of Terror in 1793.
- **Maximilien Robespierre:** A Jacobin leader who headed the **Committee of Public Safety** during the radical phase of the French Revolution. He oversaw the **Reign of Terror**, during which thousands were executed for perceived opposition to the revolution. He was ultimately executed himself in 1794.
- **Napoleon Bonaparte:** A general who rose to power in a 1799 **coup d'état**, toppling the Directory. He crowned himself **Emperor Napoleon I** in 1804. He is famous for the **Napoleonic Code** (Civil Code), which spread revolutionary principles like legal equality and religious toleration across Europe. After a disastrous invasion of Russia and defeat at the **Battle of Waterloo** (1815), he was exiled twice, eventually dying on St. Helena.
- **Toussaint Louverture:** A former slave who led the **Haitian Revolution** starting in 1792. His leadership resulted in the only successful slave rebellion in history, which established an independent constitution and debunked theories of black African inferiority.
- **Simon de Bolivar:** A Venezuelan-born Creole leader who organized nationalist revolutions against Spanish rule in South America. Inspired by Enlightenment ideals and his observations in Europe, he wrote the **Jamaica Letter** and successfully created the state of **Gran Colombia** in 1821.

- **Jose de San Martin:** A Creole nationalist leader who liberated **Argentina** from Spanish rule and coordinated with Bolivar to free the rest of South America.
 - **Tsar Alexander II:** A Russian ruler who enacted the "Great Reforms," most notably the **emancipation of the serfs** in 1861, in a state-sponsored attempt to help Russia catch up to the industrialized West.
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III. Industrialization and Economic Thinkers

- **Adam Smith (1723-1790):** The author of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), in which he codified the system of **Capitalism**. He argued that a "Free Market" driven by competition would ensure low prices and high quality. He introduced the concept of the "**Invisible Hand**," where the self-interest of suppliers to make a profit naturally meets the needs of society.
- **James Watt:** The inventor of the improved **steam engine** (1775), which utilized coal as a high-power source for machinery, allowing factories to move away from water sources and accelerating the Industrial Revolution.
- **James Hargreaves:** Inventor of the **Spinning Jenny** (1764), a machine that mechanized textile production.
- **Richard Arkwright:** Inventor of the **Water Frame** (1769), which further increased the efficiency of textile manufacturing.
- **Eli Whitney:** Inventor of the **cotton gin** (1793), which accelerated the production of raw cotton (and, consequently, the demand for slave labor).
- **Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels:** Authors of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). They developed **Marxism/Communism**, arguing that history is a struggle over **private property**. They called for a violent **proletariat revolution** to overthrow the bourgeoisie and eventually eliminate all borders and private property.
- **John Stuart Mill (JSM):** A proponent of **Utilitarianism** (the idea that laws should make the greatest number of people happy). He developed **Classical Liberalism**, advocating for expanded suffrage (voting rights) for the working class and women.

- **Otto von Bismarck:** The chief advisor to the German Kaiser who organized the **Berlin Conference** (1884) to divide Africa. Domestically, he pioneered **socialist policies**—such as accident insurance and pensions—to appease the working class and maintain state power.
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IV. Imperialism and 19th-Century Resistance

- **Commodore Matthew Perry:** A U.S. Navy officer who arrived in Japan in 1853, using the threat of "gunboat bombardment" to force the Shogunate to open the country to world trade.
 - **Emperor Meiji:** Restored to power during the 1868 **Meiji Restoration**, he oversaw Japan's rapid industrialization and modernization by mimicking Western science, military, and culture.
 - **King Leopold II:** The Belgian King who established a private colony in the **Congo**. He became infamous for barbaric practices, including the systematic torture and removal of limbs of Africans who failed to meet production quotas.
 - **Hong Xiuquan:** A prophetic leader who believed he was the younger brother of Jesus Christ. He led the **Taiping Rebellion** (1850–1864) against the Qing Dynasty, seeking to establish a peaceful, egalitarian society.
 - **Wovoka:** A Sioux tribesman who initiated the **Ghost Dance Movement**. He believed the dance would restore Native American harmony, bring back the buffalo, and remove white Americans from their lands.
 - **Shaka Zulu:** The Zulu king who united South African tribes in the 1820s.
 - **Queen Liliuokalani:** The last monarch of the **Kingdom of Hawaii**, who was overthrown in an 1893 American-backed coup.
 - **Muhammad Ali:** An Egyptian leader who established Egypt as an autonomous **Khedivate**. He nationalized land for cotton cultivation and established a professional standing army to industrialize Egypt independently of the Ottoman Empire.
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V. The 20th Century: Conflict and Cold War

- **Archduke Franz Ferdinand:** The heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne whose 1914 assassination by the **Black Hand** (a Serbian nationalist/anarchist group) sparked **World War I**.
- **Vladimir Lenin:** Leader of the **Bolshevik Party** who led the 1917 **Bolshevik Revolution** in Russia under the slogan "**Peace, Land, and Bread**". He established the USSR and implemented the **New Economic Policy (NEP)** to combat post-war famine.
- **Joseph Stalin:** Lenin's successor and a hardline totalitarian ruler. He abolished the NEP in favor of **agricultural collectivization**, which led to the **Holodomor** (Ukrainian famine) and the deaths of millions. He also conducted the **Great Purge** to eliminate political and military rivals.
- **Adolf Hitler:** The Nazi leader of Germany who rose to power on anti-Versailles sentiment. A **totalitarian fascist**, he implemented the **Nuremberg Laws** and oversaw the **Holocaust**, the systemic murder of 6 million Jews and 5 million other "non-Aryans".
- **Benito Mussolini:** The fascist dictator of Italy who sought to restore Italian prestige. He utilized the "Black Shirts" (military) and secret police to maintain total state control.
- **Woodrow Wilson:** U.S. President during WWI who proposed the **Fourteen Points** and the creation of the **League of Nations** to ensure global peace.
- **Winston Churchill:** British Prime Minister during WWII who famously vowed "no surrender" during the **Battle of Britain**.
- **Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR):** U.S. President during the Great Depression and WWII. He initiated the **New Deal** to address economic hardship.
- **Harry Truman:** Succeeded FDR; he authorized the use of **atomic bombs** on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end WWII. He also established the **Truman Doctrine** to contain the spread of communism.
- **Albert Einstein:** A physicist who published papers on **Relativity**, proving that time, space, and gravity are not constant but interactive.

- **Max Planck:** A physicist who spearheaded the field of **Quantum Mechanics**, discovering that human observation impacts subatomic particles.
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VI. Modern Decolonization and Human Rights

- **Mao Zedong:** Leader of the Chinese Communist Party who took power in 1949. He led the **Great Leap Forward** (resulting in 20–50 million deaths) and the **Cultural Revolution** to maintain revolutionary fervor.
- **Deng Xiaoping:** Succeeded Mao and implemented market-oriented reforms that modernized the Chinese economy. However, he maintained strict authoritarian control, as evidenced by his military crackdown on the 1989 **Tiananmen Square protests**.
- **Mahatma Gandhi:** Leader of the Indian independence movement who utilized **mass civil disobedience** (non-violent protest). His tactics, such as the **Salt March**, successfully pressured Britain into granting India independence in 1947.
- **Ho Chi Minh:** A communist nationalist leader who led the struggle for **Vietnamese independence** from French and later American forces.
- **Pol Pot:** Leader of the **Khmer Rouge** in Cambodia. He oversaw a genocidal campaign in the "**Killing Fields**," murdering millions of ethnic Vietnamese, capitalists, and religious groups.
- **Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK Jr.):** A U.S. Civil Rights leader inspired by Gandhi's non-violence. He led the **Montgomery Bus Boycott** and various marches that resulted in the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**.
- **Nelson Mandela:** (Though not detailed in depth in these specific snippets, he is listed in associated world leader contexts regarding global human rights).
- **Margaret Thatcher & Ronald Reagan:** Leaders of the UK and US in the 1980s who implemented **Free Market policies** (Reaganomics/Austerity) to address **Stagflation**.

- **Kwame Nkrumah:** Leader of **Ghana's** independence movement and an advocate for **Pan-Africanism**.
- **Gamal Nasser:** The Egyptian leader who nationalized the **Suez Canal** and was considered the father of **Pan-Arabism**.